HISTORY OF THIRD PARTY MOVEMENT

From the St. Louis Globe.

This is a period of great partisan perturbation. Seldom have so many bolts in conventions so many scisms of different sorts of parties, and so much independent voting taken place as have occurred in the past few years. About half a dozen years ago the populist party appeared, drew heavily from each of the two organizations—from the republicans principally in the west and from the democrats in the south—and now that party has virtually merged itself in the democracy, leaving only a small faction, the "middle-of-the-road" men as an independent organization. Bolts took place in the republican, democratic and prohibitionist conventions in 1896, and the populist party split on vice-president, the larger element fusing with the democratic ticket, and the smaller faction supporting the head of that ticket, but putting up a candidate of its own for vice-president. In several states in 1897 the fusion was continued, and the probability is that it will maintain in 1900, which will mean the absorption of the larger element of the populists by the democracy. Apparently, also, the gold democrats who bolted the Bryan ticket in 1896, the majority of them acting with the republican party during that year's canvass, and the rest of them supporting nominees of their own, are drifting back to their old party. The future of the element of the republicans who rejected their party's gold standard policy in 1896 and went to the democracy is uncertain, but the probability is that most of them will continue their new affiliation in 1900 if silver is the issue in that year.

Independent movements in the municipal elections in Chicago and New York took place in 1897. In 1897, also, the prohibition candidate for state treasurer in Pennsylvania obtained 119,000 votes, while the normal prohibition vote in that state is about 20,000. The management of their party was objectionable to tens of thousands of republicans, and nearly 100,000 of them, as a protest against the machine, voted the prohibition ticket. On a large and constantly increasing element of the voters party ties these days sit lightly. In this article the more important independent or "third" party movements from the beginning of the country's history will be mentioned, and their causes and consequences set forth.

In the popular mind John Randolph does not ordinarily figure in the role of a partisan independent, although his propensity to quarrel with everybody with whom he had any connection and to get on the outside of the parties with which he affiliated is well known. Yet Randolph headed the first bolt which took place after party lines became fairly drawn in this country. The bolt took place in 1806. The Ninth congress met on Dec. 2, 1805, and President Jefferson sent his annual message on the 3d, in which he assumed a warlike tone against Spain on account of her aggressive action against the United States on the question of the boundary of Florida, which region belonged to Spain until 1821. On the 6th he sent a secret message, in which he urged an appropriation to effect a settlement of the troubles with Spain. Both messages were referred to the ways and means committee, of which Randolph was the chairman. Randolph disliked Jefferson and Madison, the latter of whom was secretary of state, and who, with Jefferson's support, was considered in the direct "line of succession" to the presidency. Randolph wanted James Monroe to be nominated in 1808, at the end of Jefferson's second term, instead of Madison.

On March 6, 1806, Randolph, in one of the bitterest speeches ever made in congress by himself or anybody else, formally declared war on the administration. In opposing a resolution for prohibiting the importation of British goods, in retaliation for Pitt's attack on the United States carrying trade, Randolph asked, contemptuously, "Is this a measure of the cabinet?" and answered that he did not mean of "an open, declared cabinet, but of an invisible, inscrutable, unconstitutional cabinet, without responsibility, unknown to the constitution!" "I speak," he said, "of back stairs influence, of men who bring messages to this house which, although they do not appear on its journals, govern its decisions. * * * Like all true political quacks you deal only in handbills and nostrums. * * * And where are you going to send your political panacea—resolutions and handbills excepted, your sole arcanum of government, your king cure-all? To Madrid? No! You are not such quacks as not to know where the shoe pinches. * * * After shrinking from the Spanish jackal, do you presume to bully the British lion?"

This terrific assault on the Jefferson administration put Randolph outside of the republican (democratic) party, and produced what was called the revolt of the Quids, the first break which occurred in the republican ranks. The term was from the Latin words tertium quid, or "third something." Thus they were distinguished from the two great parties, the republicans and federalists. About half a dozen republicans followed Randolph out of their party. The quids never became a national party, although the republican enemies of Jefferson who did not go into the federalist party, in the few states in which they existed, went under that designation. They warred first against Jefferson and then against Madison, supporting the federalists in their opposition to the embargo, and the general restrictive system of the republicans. When Madison put Monroe into his cabinet, however, on April 2, 1811, as secretary of state, and thus acknowledged Monroe as his political heir, the ultimate reason for the quids' existence disappeared, and they dropped back into the republican ranks.

The earliest of all the third parties, however, which formally put a presidential ticket in the field, was the Anti-Masonic party. William Morgan, of Batavia, N. Y., a member of the Masonic order, who threatened to reveal its secrets, was spirited off to Niagara, in 1826, and a body soon afterward was found in the river below the falls, which some of his friends asserted was his. The crime was attributed to the Masons, great excitement was created throughout the country, and a party was formed in New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont and several other states which aimed to exclude Masons from all political offices. The crusade soon entered national politics. The Anti-Masonic party had a national ticket in the field in 1832, consisting of William Wirt, of Maryland, for president, and Amos Ellmaker, of Pennsylvania, for vice-president. It carried only one state, Vermont. Immediately afterward it disappeared from the national stage, though as a local organization it lingered in several states for a few years longer.

The second of the minor parties which can be said to have had a national organization was the liberty party, and it participated in two presidential canvasses—1840 and 1844. Unlike the Anti-Masonic party, it never received an electoral vote. It turned the scale in one election, however, 1844, and had far greater effect in politics than had the quids or the Anti-Masons, for it represented a principal, opposition to human slavery, which made morality and civilization its allies, and time was on its side. James G. Birney was its presidential candidate each year.

Next on the roll of the minor organizations was the free soil party. It was a successor to the liberty party, but had a less radical programme—the exclusion of slavery from the territories. It participated in the presidential canvasses of 1848 and 1852, in the earlier of which years its ticket was ex-President Martin Van Buren, of New York, and Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, and in the later year it was John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, and Geo. W. Julian, of Indiana. Van Buren's vote was 291,263 and Hale's 156,149. The reason why Van Buren's vote in 1848 was much larger than Hale's was four years later was that many democrats voted for Van Buren who had no especial sympathy for the free soil movement, but wanted to wreak revenge on Cass, the regular democratic candidate in 1848, who was largely responsible for Van Buren's defeat for the presidential nomination in the democratic convention of 1844. They beat Cass by taking enough votes away from him in New York to give that state and the election to Taylor, the whig nominee. Before 1852 most of those persons, their vengeance being gratified, were back in the democratic party. This is the principal reason why Hale's vote was far smaller than Van Buren's. George W. Julian, who was on the ticket with Hale, is still alive. He is the most distinguished survivor of the old anti-slavery leaders.

The greatest of all the nativistic parties, and the only one which had any national importance, now appears. This was the know-nothing party, which in 1856 nominated ex-President Millard Fillmore for president, and Andrew Jackson Donelson, of Tennessee, for vice-president. It polled 874,534 votes, and carried Maryland. The know-nothing party in 1854 and 1855 swept many states in state canvasses, but it never took part in a presidential election except that of 1856. Its creed was hostility to foreigners, especially Roman Catholics. Many parties on the same general lines appeared before and since the know-nothing party, the American Protective association of recent years among them, but none of them was so widely extended or exerted so much influence. In 1856 the know-nothing party's official name was the American party. Several times in the past quarter of a century parties bearing this name have put up presidential tickets, but they attracted no popular attention, and their vote was so small that it is often omitted from the election figures in the political almanacs.

One more minor organization, the constitutional union party, appeared before the war. It was composed of old whigs who had held aloof, after the death of their party in 1854, from both the republican and the democratic parties, of ex-know-nothings, and of the ultra conservative elements of both the great parties, who thought the burning issue of the day could be settled by ignoring it. Thus in its platform it declared vaguely for "the constitution of the country, the union of the states and the enforcement of the laws." The constitutional union party's only canvass was that of 1860, and its ticket was John Bell, of Tennessee, and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts. Despite its lack of principles and of concrete policy, it carried three states, all on the border line of the slave region—Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee—rolling up a popular vote of 589,581, and an electoral vote of 39. Douglas, the candidate of the northern faction of the democrats in the same canvass, had less than a third of as many electoral votes—12—but he had more than twice as many popular votes—1,375,157.

Omitting the liberal republican party of 1872, and the national democratic party of 1896, there have been four "third" parties since the war—the prohibitionist, the greenback, the labor and the populist. The liberal republican party was a bolting faction of the republicans, who were in alliance with the democracy in 1872 through the acceptance of their ticket—Horace Greely, of New York, and B. Gratz Brown, of Missouri—by the latter party. After the election of 1872 about a third or a fourth of the liberal republicans remained with the democracy, and the rest of them drifted back to the republican party. The national democrats, who nominated Palmer and Buckner, were the conservative element of their party, but were put in the category of bolters by the circumstance that the radicals were largely in the majority, and selected a ticket and a platform which the nationals refused to support. In the state elections of 1897, however, many of the national democrats began to do what the liberal republicans did in 1873 and 1874—swing back to their old party. The probabilities are that in 1900, whatever the platform of the element now in control of the machinery of the democracy may be, there will be only one party in the field having the democratic name.

The prohibition organization has participated in more than twice as many presidential canvasses as the longest lived of the other "third" parties. Making its appearance on the national stage in 1872, it has nominated a presidential ticket in every canvass of the past quarter of a century, beginning with that year. In 1896 the disruptive forces which split the two gerat parties divided the prohibitionists, but the element which clung to the name, the machinery and the traditions of the party polled the larger vote Thus the prohibition party has participated in seven presidential canvasses. The greenback party, which took part in three, ranks next to the prohibition party in the scale of longevity among the minor organizations. From the beginning of its career along until 1896 there was a steady increase in thep rohibition vote, but in that year it was only about two-thirds as great as it was in 1892.

The other minor parties—greenback, labor and populist—were, in their general features, of the same political type. All of them, but the labor and the populist particularly, aimed at the enlargement of the functions of the government for the protection of labor. All of them—for the greenback party in 1880 did this—declared for the free coinage of silver. All of them wanted currency to be issued directly by the government, and to deprive banks of this function, and all of them desired the abolition of the national banking system. This government currency (greenback) principle gave the name to the first of these three parties. It called itself the national or the independent national party, but the greenback was its popular designation. The greenback party participated in the presidential elections of 1876, 1880 and 1884, its presidential candidates in these years, respectively, being Peter Cooper, James B. Weaver and Benjamin F. Butler. Cooper's vote was, in round figures, 82,000, Weaver's 307,000 and Butler's 133,000. The union labor party, which was, in a certain sense, the successor of the greenback party, figured in the canvass of 1888, its presidential candidate being Alanson J. Streeter, whose vote was 147,000. Neither the greenback nor the labor party ever received an electoral vote. A united labor party (singletax) was in the field in 1888, but it polled only 21,000 votes.

Greater than either of its two predecessors in numbers and influence was the populist party, which entered the national arena in 1892. Its presidential candidate in that year, James B. Weaver, was the greenback standard bearer of 1880, but in the canvass of 1892 he received over three times as many votes as in the earlier year, 1,041,028. He carried Colorado, Idaho, Kansas and Nevada, and obtained one electoral vote in North Dakota, and one in Oregon, or twenty-two in all. The populist popular vote was the largest ever polled by any third party in the country's history, and its electoral vote was the greatest ever obtained by a minor party except by the constitutional unionist in 1860. In 1896 the populist party fused with the democracy, accepting the Chicago ticket, but framing a platform of its own. One faction, however, rejected the Chicago nominee for vice-president, and put up an independent candidate. The populist party's future is uncertain, but its fusions in some of the states in the elections of 1897 with the democracy, in which, as in 1896, its identity was lost in the larger organization, portends that its career as an independent party is ended, and that in 1900 there will have to be a new alignment of the radical elements.

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VALUE OF HORSE THIEVES.

Since the Introduction of Trolly Cars Their Number Decreased.

From the Washington Star.

Horse thieves, said the philosopher in one of his lectures to his class, are bad in whatever light you take them. They demoralize the moral sense of the community, besides making people walk instead of ride, and they don't half take care of the horses after they get them. A horse thief will steal a hundred dollar horse, ride him nearly to death and then sell him for $12 and a drink, all of which is calculated to wound the pride and self respect of the animal to a hurtful extent.

Some years ago before trolley cars came in and beated the horse market there were numerous crowds of organized horsethieves in the wild and woolly west, who, when not engaged in the serious occupation of horse lifting, varied their afternoons by little stage robberies and incidental murders. One of these outfits in the neighborhood of Deadwood became especially annoying to the authorities and to those citizens who were happy or unhappy in the possession of a pony. Finally patience ceased to be a virtue and the orders came from headquarters to the marshal of the district to organize a posse and bring the gang in so that retribution could be meted out. In a short time the department of justice was informed that the posse had been formed, had gone on the hunt and had returned with three prisoners, who were turned over to the authorities and whose fate is not set down in legend or song.

After a time, however, the department here was grieved by receiving without explanation a bill reading "the United States government, dr., to the Deadwood posse, $12,000 for the expenses of catching three horse thieves." Although with a doubting mind the department sent the bill to the treasury department. The treasury did not spend a moment in doubting, but with a promptitude and a harshness born of long experience turned the bill down; in fact, turned it upside down. The auditor did not content himself with a turn-down, but added some American language about people who wanted $4,000 apiece for catching everyday horse thieves, when the variety could be picked up any day on the road for $10 a head. The auditor closed with some uncomplimentary allusions to a department that would send up such accounts. The department of justice felt even more grief at this rebuke than at the receipt of the original bill and sent a friend of mine, who was in the service, out to investigate the account.

This man went out to the Deadwood neighborhood with a mind filled with prejudice. Primarily he objected to an extravagant valuation on horse thieves, and secondarily he had his opinion of a posse that, starting out to round-up a gang of horse thieves, only succeeded in capturing three. Thirdly, he did not want to go to Deadwood at all. At any rate, he began to take testimony.

His first inquiries consisted of an informal talk with the big leader of the posse, and what he learned went something like this:

"How many members were there to that horse thief gang?"

"Well, about twenty-five."

"And you captured three?"

"Yes, we put three of them in jail."

"Have the rest of the gang been giving any trouble since then?"

"Well, no, they haven't troubled us none."

"Then you must have captured the leaders?"

"No, can't say they was. The three we brought in didn't amount to much; they only cooked and carried water for the rest."

"Umph."

That closed the first round, and after light refreshments the inquiry took a new line, the man from the department having taken on some additional prejudice regarding the case.

"Well, how many were there in that posse of yours?"

"Stranger, there was just twenty-four."

"Umph! Five thousand dollars apiece. How long were you out?"

"We was out exactly twelve days."

"Whew! One thousand dollars a day."

"We've got to get at this thing some way. What did you do the first day?"

"Well, we rode and trailed."

"And the second—"

"That day we surprised the horseys in camp."

"Did you fight?"

"Well, we fit some."

"Were any of the thieves hurt?"

"Some six of them were shot up considerable."

"Killed?"

"We buried them."

"The third day?"

"We rode like h—l."

"The next—"

"We came onto the horseys as they was crossing a ford."

"Any thieves hurt?"

"We buried five of them afterwards."

"The fifth day?"

"We trailed and hunted horseys separately."

"Any fighting?"

"Well, there was considerable shooting and cutting. I believe five of them was ready for the resurrection."

"What about the sixth day?"

"That day we got the drop on six of them in a canon and had 'em tied before they knew it."

"What did you do with them?"

"Well, stranger, the boys hanged them six. Being an officer of the government, of course I didn't take no hand in it, but kept my back turned until it was all over. The next day we caught the last three. They threw up their hands soon as we got in shooting range. The boys was going to hang them, too, but I said 'No! No, sirree,' I said. The United States government has sent you out to catch these horse thieves; the United States government is paying good wages, and expenses, and I'll be d—d if the United States government shan't get something for its money. These three horse thieves goes quietly back to jail; besides,' I says, 'they ain't no regular horse thieves, anyway, they's only cooks and watermen.' Then we rode peaceful back to camp, being 200 miles therefrom."

My friend was a little weak by this time, but he managed to continue.

"Wasn't anybody in your party hurt?"

"Oh, yes. We was all considerable shot and cut up."

"Anybody killed?"

"Fourteen of the boys was killed outright and two has died since then."

"What was your idea of disposing of the $12,000 you have asked?"

"Well, the boys thought the survivors ought to get about $25 apiece for their services, and that the widders and orphans ought to take the rest.

"Colonel, will you take a drink?"

"Some!"

Then the man from the department sent a telegram to his chief saying that the Deadwood bill was all right and that the auditor was an ass.

The philosopher said he did not know whether the moral of his story was that treasury auditors did not know as much as they thought they did, or that horse thieves were worth more dead than alive.